



## CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE COST ESTIMATE

April 26, 2000

### **S. 2367**

### **Travel, Tourism, and Jobs Preservation Act**

*As reported by the Senate Committee on the Judiciary on April 13, 2000*

Enacting this legislation would affect direct spending, so pay-as-you-go procedures would apply; but CBO estimates there would be no significant net impact in any year. S. 2367 contains no intergovernmental or private-sector mandates as defined in the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act and would impose no direct costs on state, local, or tribal governments.

An existing pilot program for providing visa waivers enables persons from designated countries to visit the United States for up to 90 days without having to obtain a visa. Under current law, this program will expire on April 30, 2000. S. 2367 would make the program permanent and would make several other changes that aim to improve the operation of the program. The bill also would require the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) to periodically prepare reports for the Congress relating to the visa waiver program.

Under current law, after the expiration of the pilot program on April 30, 2000, the INS and the Department of State will collect fees from issuing visas to short-term visitors who otherwise would have participated in the pilot program. The fees charged by the INS and the State Department are available for spending on administrative costs and on consular affairs. Because about 15 million people enter the United States annually under the pilot program, collections of these fees would be significant. Enacting S. 2367 would result in forgone collections, but spending by the two agencies would also be lower because no visas would be issued for short-term visitors. As a result, there would be no significant net impact on direct spending in any year. CBO estimates that it would cost INS less than \$500,000 annually, to prepare the reports required by the bill, and these costs would be offset by fees charged by the agency.

On April 14, 2000, CBO transmitted a cost estimate for H.R. 3767, the Visa Waiver Permanent Program Act, as passed by the House of Representatives on April 11, 2000. Both of these pieces of legislation would make the pilot program permanent and our estimates of their costs are the same.

The CBO staff contacts for this estimate are Mark Grabowicz and Sunita D'Monte. This estimate was approved by Peter H. Fontaine, Deputy Assistant Director for Budget Analysis.